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LETTER DATED 30 MARCH 1995 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND SWEDEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the request of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, we have the honour to transmit their letter of 21 March 1995 addressed to you (see annex)

Please have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

(Signed) H. SALANDER
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Sweden
to the United Nations

95-09348 (E) 310395 030495

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Annex

[Original: English and Russian]

Letter dated 21 March 1995 from the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to paragraph 8 of United Nations Security Council resolution 884 (1993), we wish, after consultations with the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to make a report on efforts made in the framework of the Minsk Process for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, in particular since the decision by the CSCE Summit at Budapest on 6 December 1994 concerning the intensification of CSCE action in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict (see appendix).

In accordance with that decision, a Co-Chairmanship for the OSCE Minsk Process has been established between Sweden and the Russian Federation. We, Ambassadors Jan Eliasson and Valentin Lozinsky, have been appointed Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Conference by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. It is our firm belief that the establishment of a Co-Chairmanship for the Minsk Process constitutes an important step towards a negotiated solution of the conflict. A draft mandate for the Co-Chairmanship has been agreed between the Co-Chairmen.

The cease-fire in effect since 12 May 1994 is still largely being respected. The cease-fire has subsequently been reconfirmed on a number of occasions. The parties are committed to respect it until a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict has been attained. through the efforts of the Co-Chairmanship the parties have, through an exchange of letters, committed themselves, from 6 February 1995, to mutual obligations to further strengthen the cease-fire through direct contacts and other confidence-building measures to avoid escalation of incidents.

During a recent visit to the region, the representatives of the Co-Chairmanship of the Minsk Conference presented an agreed basis for further negotiations to the parties to the conflict in accordance with the decision at the Budapest Summit. The agreed basis was thereafter discussed at a round of negotiations between the parties held in Moscow in February under the auspices of the Co-Chairmanship of the Conference. Negotiations are to continue at Stockholm, but direct substantive contacts between the parties are necessary in order to facilitate progress.

The issue of civilian detainees and prisoners of war has been given particular attention by the Co-Chairmanship. Conditions for the exchanges of civilian detainees and prisoners of war were discussed in particular during the recent visit to the region by the representatives of the Co-Chairmanship. A meeting, within the framework of the Minsk Group, was held in Moscow on 11 February, with the presence of, inter alia, representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). At this meeting, a preliminary

agreement was reached for the immediate release of all persons wounded, sick and over 50 years of age. The parties also reconfirmed their earlier commitments to release all women and minors under 16 years of age. The parties also agreed to establish a special working group for these issues under the auspices of ICRC and with the support of the Co-Chairmanship. We intend to follow up on these and other confidence-building measures, in close cooperation with ICRC, UNHCR and other international humanitarian organizations and agencies.

We foresee the finalization, in the near future, of the agreement to establish an OSCE presence in the region in the form of a personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office and field representatives.

It remains the view of the parties that a peace-keeping operation will be necessary to give a maximum guarantee to the political agreement. the High-level Planning Group foreseen by the Budapest Summit decision has been established and is actively working out recommendations for the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on planning and preparations for an OSCE peace-keeping force. The Head of the High-level Planning Group, General Heikki Vilén, participated in the recent visit of the Co-Chairmanship to the region.

We deem it of great importance that the peace-keeping operation be reliable and assure the parties and the contributing States of a close linkage with the political process as well as of the speedy achievement of an effective comprehensive settlement. Continuous political support from the United Nations Security Council for the possible deployment of an OSCE peace-keeping force as well as United Nations technical advice and expertise would be necessary if such an operation is carried out. The United Nations assistance to the High-level Planning Group in its work is much appreciated.

Negotiations between the conflicting parties and a meeting of the Minsk Group scheduled at Stockholm from 20 to 24 March were postponed because the positions of conflicting parties did not ensure the necessary conditions for constructive talks. The Co-Chairmanship intends in the near future to undertake a visit to the region for consultations with the parties. After this visit and consultations within the Minsk Group and with other OSCE member States at the forthcoming meeting of the OSCE Senior Council, we intend to provide the Security Council with a further substantive report on the peace process in the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

(Signed) Jan ELIASSON
Co-Chairman of the
OSCE Minsk Conference

(Signed) Valentin LOZINSKY
Co-Chairman of the
OSCE Minsk Conference

Appendix

[Original: English and Russian]

Regional issues

Intensification of CSCE action in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

1. Deploring the continuation of the conflict and the human tragedy involved, the participating States welcomed the confirmation by the parties to the conflict of the cease-fire agreed on 12 May 1994 through the mediation of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the CSCE Minsk Group. They confirmed their commitment to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and welcomed the political support given by the Council to CSCE efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. To this end they called on the parties to the conflict to enter into intensified substantive talks, including direct contacts. In this context, they pledged to redouble the efforts and assistance by CSCE. They strongly endorsed the mediation efforts of the CSCE Minsk Group and expressed appreciation for the crucial contribution of the Russian Federation and the efforts by other individual members of the Minsk Group. They agreed to harmonize these into a single coordinated effort within the framework of CSCE.

2. To this end, they have directed the Chairman-in-Office, in consultation with the participating States and acting as soon as possible, to name co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference to ensure a common and agreed basis for negotiations and to achieve full coordination in all mediation and negotiation activities. the Co-Chairmen, guided in all of their negotiating efforts by CSCE principles and an agreed mandate, will jointly chair meetings of the Minsk Group and jointly report to the Chairman-in-Office. They will regularly brief the Permanent Council on the progress of their work.

3. As a first step in this effort, they directed the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to take immediate steps to promote, with the support and cooperation of the Russian Federation and other individual members of the Minsk Group, the continuation of the existing cease-fire and, drawing upon the progress already achieved in previous mediation activities, to conduct speedy negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, the implementation of which will eliminate major consequences of the conflict for all parties and permit the convening of the Minsk Conference. They further requested the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to continue working with the parties towards further implementation of confidence-building measures, particularly in the humanitarian field. They underlined the need for participating States to take action, both individually and within relevant international organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the region with special emphasis on alleviating the plight of refugees.

4. They agreed that, in line with the view of the parties to the conflict, the conclusion of the agreement mentioned above would also make it possible to

deploy multinational peace-keeping forces as an essential element for the implementation of the agreement itself. They declared their political will to provide, with an appropriate resolution from the United Nations Security Council, a multinational CSCE peace-keeping force following agreement among the parties for cessation of the armed conflict. They requested the Chairman-in-Office to develop as soon as possible a plan for the establishment, composition and operation of such a force, organized on the basis of chapter III of the Helsinki Document of 1992 and in a manner fully consistent with the Charter of the United Nations. To this end the Chairman-in-Office will be assisted by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference and by the Minsk Group, and will be supported by the Secretary-General; after appropriate consultations he will also establish a high-level planning group at Vienna to make recommendations on, inter alia, the size and characteristics of the force, command and control, logistics, allocation of units and resources, rules of engagement and arrangements with contributing States. He will seek the support of the United Nations on the basis of the stated United Nations readiness to provide technical advice and expertise. He will also seek continuing political support from the United Nations Security Council for the possible deployment of a CSCE peace-keeping force.

5. On the basis of such preparatory work and the relevant provisions of chapter III of the Helsinki Document of 1992, and following agreement and a formal request by the parties to the Chairman-in-Office through the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference, the Permanent Council will take a decision on the establishment of the CSCE peace-keeping operation.